

# PLAN REALIZATION

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*This section looks at the means for bringing about the Vision described throughout this Plan and for ways to ensure that the community continues to view the Vision and the Plan as remaining current and pertinent to them.*

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## MEANS FOR REALIZING THE PLAN'S VISION

Bringing about the future portrayed in this document begins when the Plan is formally adopted by the City and County. The Plan then becomes the community's guide for directing its resources and energy toward making this common vision a reality. The ways to achieve this objective are further described below.

### COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT: KEEPING THE TRADITION ALIVE

The City of Lincoln and Lancaster County have long encouraged the public to participate in local government activities. Keeping people knowledgeable about and involved with the Comprehensive Plan's implementation is crucial to ensuring its ultimate success.

A key to securing community interest in the planning process is early involvement. An emphasis should be placed on providing ample, "up front" participation. This includes having the community identify planning issues of concern to them and having them aid in setting up the process for so doing.

Part of the City and County's tradition of involving the public is having citizens regularly serve on boards and commissions. These groups address a wide variety of civic concerns. Meetings are kept open to all members of the community. Public hearings on key issues — such as Plan amendments, the capital improvements program, subarea studies, specific development proposals — are held as part of the continuing planning process. Public hearings and many other meetings of elected officials are televised over the community access stations (5-City TV) along with simulcasts over the Internet.

Additional means used or that should be considered for insuring continuing community involvement in the planning process include:

- Encouraging developers and others with planning proposals to make early contact with neighborhood groups and other interested parties. This will allow for a greater understanding of the issues and for time to seek resolution of contentious points.
- Maintain — through the City's Urban Development Department — current mailing and contact lists of local neighborhood groups and home owner associations.

#### *Interaction between the Comprehensive Plan and the Citizens*

*Although the Comprehensive Plan is intended primarily to guide the physical development of our community, the results of such development are ultimately felt by individuals and their families. The planning process aspires to make this interaction between people and their physical landscape one in which all facets of our community can prosper, not only economically, but also intellectually, aesthetically, and spiritually. The Comprehensive Plan seeks to accommodate and encourage the participation of all citizens of the city and county in the making of public policies to implement the visions of the community. Comprehensive planning is a continuous process, requiring a continuing, equitable, and frequent interaction between the governments and their constituencies.*

*Comprehensive Plan Vision*

- Contact surrounding property owners, interested groups, and other appropriate agencies of formal development applications. This communication could be in written correspondence and/or email depending upon funding and staff resources.
- Keep current a broadly based inventory of planning information on the Planning Department's InterLine Website. This can include application status, reports, study status indicators, interactive mapping applications, and meeting schedules.
- Utilize email response capabilities and community electronic "bulletin boards" on the Planning Department's InterLine website to allow for the exchange of ideas on development and planning policy proposals.
- Establish and maintain a list of local translators that can be available to community members needing language translation or similar assistance.
- Explore options for allowing the electronic submittal of applications and supporting documents in a digital format using the Internet.
- Publish selected translations of planning reports and other related public documents in a variety of language groups.
- Distribute planning reports and meeting notices — including posters, signs, and flyers — across the community in stores, businesses and community facilities serving traditional minority, ethnic, low income, and aging populations.
- Offer free Internet access on an on-going basis at public libraries, senior centers, and publicly owned locations of common assembly.
- Conduct periodic workshops and charettes throughout various locations in the city and county to solicit ideas for planning and public policy.
- Examine ways of simplifying the development regulations and supporting documentation to encourage a broader understanding of planning concepts and their relevance to neighborhoods' and businesses' continuity and viability.

## **LAND USE ADMINISTRATION**

The planning process has long had at its disposal a number of administrative and regulatory tools for implementing comprehensive plans. Many of these reach back eighty to one hundred years. Some of the land use administration approaches to be used in plan implementation include:

**Zoning** - Zoning is a legal means cities and counties use for deciding how land can be used, the intensity of those land uses, and the relationships between various land uses. Nebraska State law — as with most all states — requires zoning to be developed in accordance with the community's adopted Comprehensive Plan.



This is one of the primary reasons cities and counties have Comprehensive Plans. Zoning — as a legal document — is contained as both a map showing the geographic boundaries of each district and a written ordinance detailing the uses and conditions of each district. For the City of Lincoln, the zoning ordinance is presented in Title 27 of the Lincoln Municipal Code; while the County's zoning standards are contained in "County Zoning and Subdivision Regulations."

**Subdivision Standards** — A subdivision is the technique used for creating legally defined land parcels upon which development can occur. While a variety of standards apply to where, when, and how the subdivision of land can happen, having an approved subdivision plat is a basic step in the development process.

**Design Standards** – Special site design or other conditions not otherwise covered in the zoning ordinance or subdivision standards are contained in a series of “design standards.” These standards spell out unique characteristics that may apply to a type of development proposal. They include more specific standards for subdivision and certain zoning districts. These include, for example, design considerations for older, more intensely developed neighborhoods, for childcare centers, for technology parks, for trails, and for an area around the Nebraska State Capitol.

As these are applied in the future, consideration should be given to the continued use and possible expansion of “fast track” incentives. These incentives allow development proposals to be reviewed, and possibly approved in a shorter period of time than might normally occur.

Another procedural technique currently in use is giving the City-County Planning Commission broader approval authority for selected types of administrative actions. In some cases, the Commission can give final approval to a development proposal, thus by-passing the City Council and County Board. This saves the developer time in the review process. Appeal procedures are also part of this process should additional review by the Council or Board be desired by the applicant or others.

## CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAMMING

As an implementation tool, the capital improvements programming process plays a vital role in guiding when and where the city – and even to some degree rural areas — grow. Capital improvements programming can be separated into two broad areas:

**Public Sector Contributions** – Investment in capital facilities – generally defined as any improvements with a useful life in excess of 15 years – has a powerful influence on the development of a community. Roads, water, trails, wastewater, parks, street lights, fire stations, libraries, government administration buildings, schools, electrical facilities, and sanitary landfills are all basic pieces of what makes up a city. Hundreds of millions of dollars of public tax dollars and user fees are invested each year in these facilities. The public process used to determine where and when such investment occurs is basic in determining how the Comprehensive Plan’s Vision is achieved.

The City and County each use an annual capital improvements process. Both jurisdictions designate those capital improvements they plan to build over the next six fiscal years. The document that does this is called the “Capital Improvements Program” or CIP for short. The first year of the CIP is termed the “Capital Budget.” It is the list of projects formally approved by the elected officials.

The City of Lincoln’s Charter requires that before the City Council can approve a capital project it must undergo a test of “Comprehensive Plan conformity.” This means that the Planning Commission or Planning Department must issue a report stating whether the proposed capital expenditure is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. Should the project be found to be not in conformance with the Plan, the City Council can still approve the project. No equivalent Plan conformity standard is applies in the County’s CIP process.



A companion document to the CIP – called the “Transportation Improvement Program” or TIP – is also prepared on an annual basis. This task is assigned to the Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Organization. The TIP gathers together in a single document those local, State and Federal transportation capital projects proposed for the next six years. These include improvements for streets and highway, airports, railroad support facilities, trails, and public transit.

**Private Sector Contributions** – Private capital is a significant part of the funding used to construct infrastructure in new developments. Most local streets, sidewalks, sanitary sewer, and storm sewer mains are built and paid for by the private developer. Decisions made in the private sector play an important role in managing and guiding the expansion of the urban area. Expenditures from private sources are critical to furthering the growth of the community.

## **CONCURRENCY POLICY**

Public infrastructure — including roads, water, sewer, parks, schools, and libraries – is essential to the health, safety, and welfare of the community. As the community grows, it is desirable that these systems and facilities be developed concurrently – that is, at the same time – with that growth.

If growth occurs without the development of adequate public infrastructure, or the public infrastructure lags behind the growth of the community, the quality of life in the whole community will be diminished. Facilities may become overcrowded or overused. In the worst case, essential public services might not be available, thereby threatening the health, safety and welfare of the community.

Conversely, infrastructure should not be built or developed if it is not needed. Public resources are scarce and should be conserved and used efficiently. Development of infrastructure beyond the needs of the community is a waste of resources and is not beneficial to the community as a whole.

The key to a successful community is the concurrent development of the infrastructure with the development of the community — a balance between the need for infrastructure and the need to conserve resources.

## **ANNEXATION POLICY**

Annexation policy is a potentially powerful means for achieving many of the goals embodied in the Plan’s Vision. The annexation policies of the City of Lincoln include but are not limited to the following:

The provision of municipal services shall coincide with the jurisdictional boundaries of the City – in short, it is not the intent of the City of Lincoln to extend utility services (most notably, but not necessarily limited to, water and sanitary water services) beyond the corporate limits of the City.

The extension of water and sanitary sewer services shall be predicated upon annexation of the area by the City. City annexation shall occur before any property is provided with water, sanitary sewer, or other potential City services.

Land which is remote or otherwise removed from the limits of the City of Lincoln will not be annexed; land which is contiguous to the City and generally urban in character may be annexed; and land which is engulfed by the City should be annexed.

Annexation generally implies the opportunity to access all City services. Voluntary annexation agreements may limit or otherwise outline the phasing, timing or installation of utility services (e.g., water, sanitary



sewer), and may include specific or general plans for the private financing of improvements to the infrastructure supporting or contributing to the land uses in the annexed area.

The character of existing residential areas should be respected as much as possible during the annexation process. However, any annexation of existing residential areas will include some costs which must be the responsibility of property owners.

Annexation to facilitate the installation of improvements and/or possible assessment districts is appropriate if it is consistent with the annexation policies of the Plan listed above.

Plans for the provision of services within the areas considered for annexation shall be carefully coordinated with the Capital Improvements Program of the City and the County.



Each town in Lancaster County will have their own procedures for annexation.

## **ON-GOING COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ACTIVITIES**

While the Comprehensive Plan may have received formal approval, certain long-range planning tasks remain to be completed or continued as part of the Plan's implementation. These include:

**Interagency Cooperation and Coordination** – Broad involvement of numerous public agencies and departments were used in the Plan's formulation. The cooperation and coordination of efforts with these groups needs to remain in place during the Plan's implementation.

**Joint Planning Commission and Planning Department** – The City and County created a joint City-County Planning Commission and a single City-County Planning Department more than fifty years ago. This structure has served the community well over this period. It is intended that this structure remain in place as a means for furthering the implementation of the Plan.

**City-County Common** – The City Council, County Board, and Lincoln Mayor hold a joint meeting each month to discuss issues of common concern to them. This group is known as the City-County Common. The Common provides a regular opportunity for the elected officials to discuss planning issues of joint interest to them.

**MPO Officials Committee and Technical Committee** – Through the Metropolitan Planning Organization structure, the Officials and the Technical Committees lend additional policy and technical oversight to the process. These standing groups meet on an ad hoc basis to review, discuss, and approve matters relating to

the area-wide transportation planning process. This includes the annual MPO Work Program, Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Annual Certification, Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and other related studies and programs.

**Subarea Planning** – The Comprehensive Plan provides broad guidance for achieving the community’s stated Vision. Putting details to the Plan takes additional effort. One means of doing this is through the preparation of subarea plans. Subarea plans offer greater details about the intended future of an area of the community — including land uses, infrastructure requirements, and development policies and standards. Many of these subarea plans are prepared by the City-County Planning Department, while some are prepared by other agencies and departments. Subarea plans from the previous (1994) Comprehensive Plan carried over as part of this Comprehensive Plan include:

- North 27<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor Plan, RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, April 1997.
- Antelope Valley Major Investment Study: Amended Draft Single Package, City of Lincoln; May 1998, Updated November 1998.
- Investment Strategy for a Competitive Downtown, Leland Consulting Group; 1999.
- Wilderness Park Subarea Plan; February, 2000
- Stonebridge Creek Development Area at 14<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup>, north of the Interstate; March 27, 2000.
- Greater Arnold Heights Area Neighborhood Plan; September, 2000.
- Southeast Lincoln/Highway 2 Subarea Plan; March 26, 2001.
- City-County Solid Waste Management Plan, Public Works and Utilities Department and Lincoln Lancaster County Health Department; September, 1994.
- Ground Water Management Plan, Lower Platte South Natural Resources District; April, 1995.
- Consolidated Plan for HUD Entitlement Programs; FY 2000 Urban Development;
- Lincoln Water System Facilities Master Plan, Public Works and Utilities Department; April 2003.
- Lincoln Wastewater Facilities Plan, Public Works and Utilities Department; March 2003.
- Stevens Creek Watershed Study and Flood Management Plan, Lower Platte South Natural Resources District; March 1998.
- Beal Slough Stormwater Master Plan, Olsson Associates & Wright Water Engineers; May 2000.
- Southeast Upper Salt Creek Watershed Master Plan, 2003.
- Lincoln Public Schools Comprehensive District Master Plan; May 2003
- North 48<sup>th</sup> Street/University Place Plan: Neighborhood Revitalization & Transportation Analysis, 2004
- Lincoln Airport F.A.R. Part 150 Noise Compatibility Study, 2003
- Airport West Subarea Plan, 2004
- Stevens Creek Watershed Master Plan, 2005
- Downtown Master Plan, 2005

As part of the Annual Plan Status Report process, the Planning Director should complete a yearly review of all subarea plans that become five years of age and older. This review would be for the purpose of determining the continued viability and relevance of those subareas plans to the Comprehensive Plan and the long range planning process.

As part of the first Annual Review Status Report of this Plan, some of the older studies that are not included as part of this Plan but for which updating consideration might be given include: 1989 Lincoln Area Trails Master Plan (w/1992 Supplement entitled State of the Trails Report); 1992 Mo-Pac East Recreational Trail Master Plan; 1987 Woods Park Neighborhood Plan; 1990 Downtown Housing Plan with 1994 Update; and, 1996 Downtown 2001: Heart of the City Plan.

**Human Services Planning** - Explore points of common concern and emphasis between the long range land use Comprehensive Plan and the community’s long range health and human services Community Services Implementation Plan (CSIP). Enhancing the coordination of these two endeavors should be initiated and completed within two years from the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan.

## C CONTRIBUTING PLANNING EFFORTS

During the preparation of this Comprehensive Plan, several contributing planning efforts were completed in support of the overall comprehensive planning process. These efforts involved an overall planning committee and five subordinate working groups (work products noted):

- Comprehensive Plan Committee, Draft City-County Comprehensive Plan (February 6, 2002)
- Mobility & Transportation Task Force, Draft Mobility and Transportation Sections of Comprehensive Plan (December 7, 2001)
- Economic Futures Task Force, Final Task Force Report (August 24, 2001)
- Stevens Creek Basin Initiative Task Force, Planning Guidelines and Summary Report (April, 2001)
- Infrastructure Financing Study Advisory Committee, Advisory Committee Final Report (January 8, 2001)
- Greenprint Cabinet, Greenprint Challenge (August, 2001)

All of these bodies were composed of citizens from throughout the city and county. The ideas, concepts, visions, and thoughts from all of these groups were drawn upon in the crafting of this Plan. The reports they issued were reviewed and their work is embodied throughout this document - ranging from the use of various planning concepts and guidelines to specific programs and strategies. The contribution of these groups to the Plan's creation is gratefully acknowledged.

## A ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE PLAN

Approximately one year following adoption of the Comprehensive Plan and on an annual basis thereafter, the Planning Director will prepare a report entitled the Annual Review of the Comprehensive Plan. Such report may include new and pertinent information about the community; changes in the Plan's underlying assumptions or any other factors affecting the health or welfare of the community. Such report may include specific proposals to amend the Plan.

As part of the first Annual Review of the Plan, the City Attorney and County Attorney Offices will prepare a report detailing the process and standards to be used in future Comprehensive Plan Updates and Annual Reviews for handling plan adoption and proposed amendments. This report will include a discussion of the specific roles, responsibilities, and procedures of the City-County Planning Commission, Lincoln City Council, Lancaster County Board, and Lincoln Mayor in the Plan adoption and amendment process. This report may serve as the basis for an Interlocal Agreement between the City and County.

This report and its review by the Planning Commission will be closely coordinated with the Commission's deliberations on the City of Lincoln's Capital Improvements Program (CIP) for the upcoming years.

In order to monitor the progress in attaining several of the goals and base assumptions for the new Comprehensive Plan, a variety of information will need to be reviewed annually. This information will be obtained from various sources in order to look at a broad range of indicators. The goals and assumptions to be reviewed include items such as: multi-directional growth; 1.5% annual population growth; 2.0% annual commercial employment growth; 2.5% annual industrial employment growth; 90% of County population in Lincoln; increased funding for maintenance and; accelerated infrastructure improvements.

No single indicator, in a single year, provides clear evidence of significant variation from the goals and assumptions. Instead, many indicators should be used to determine any change after at least a three year period.

If after three years, as part of the Annual Review of the Comprehensive Plan, it is determined that the community is deviating significantly from what is assumed in the Plan and that this trend can be reasonably expected to continue, then the following would occur:

- The Planning Director will forward a report to the Planning Commission, for recommendation to City Council and County Board, to determine whether an immediate update of the phasing, infrastructure, and financing components of the Comprehensive Plan should be completed within 6 months to reflect greater or lesser growth rate assumptions.
- If the Council and Board determine that an immediate update is needed, the Planning Department will work with the public and other City and County departments to determine which items should be changed. If growth accelerates significantly, some Tier II areas should be moved to Tier I and the transportation and infrastructure plans revised accordingly. A Comprehensive Plan Amendment reflecting these proposed changes will then be prepared.

## P<sub>LAN</sub> AMENDMENTS

The Plan is the community's collective vision. Yet, change is inevitable. Major technologies and new community needs will arise during the planning period which were not foreseen during the Plan's development. Jobs, housing, transportation, goods and services will shift over time. The amendment process to the Plan must accommodate and help manage the inevitable change in a way that best promotes, and does not compromise, the community's core values, health and well being. The Plan amendment process must be an open and fair process, utilizing sound planning, economic, social and ecological principals.

Amendments to the Plan may be submitted in writing to the Planning Director by any group or individual at any time during the year. The Planning Director shall have the discretion to determine the relevance of the request to the adopted Comprehensive Plan and to the comprehensive plan process. The Planning Director may elect to forward the Plan amendment request to the Planning Commission under the circumstances and timing determined most appropriate by the Director. Otherwise, amendments to the Plan by any group or individual will be compiled and reviewed by the Planning Commission once each year as part of the Planning Director's annual review of the Plan.

## P<sub>LAN</sub> UPDATE PROCESS

The next major update of the City-County Comprehensive Plan should begin no sooner than five years but no longer than seven years from the formal adoption of this Plan. This schedule is subject to further review by the Planning Director based upon new and pertinent information regarding the planning process and other relevant circumstances. At the discretion of the Planning Director, elements of this Plan may be recommended for updating independent of the broader plan update process.